



Live Oak School Trustee Mike Pisenti protested mural this morning.

Live Oak Mural Dedicated

By DALE POLLOCK
Sentinel Staff Writer

Despite a low-key protest, the dedication of a Live Oak mural celebrating a Mayan creation myth went off without a hitch this morning before 250 appreciative children and adults.

Live Oak School Board Trustee Mike Pisenti had mustered up only two other demonstrators besides himself to protest what he alleged was a "religious heathen painting."

"This particular painting has no place in the schoolgrounds when the law and the courts forbid Christ from these same schoolgrounds. If they restrict one, they've got to restrict the other," said Pisenti.

One demonstrator, Bill Will, carried a placard stating that Christians oppose the mural, but there seemed little support for the protestors' stand from among those present.

A smiling Supervisor Phil Baldwin declared, "I love it. I think it has artistic, not religious, significance. It has no more religion than history

books have in the schools. I view it as a real asset to the community."

Protestor Hilda Lans, never a big fan of Baldwin's, didn't see the mural quite the same way. "I'm protesting having the religion put onto the wall in the name of culture," Lans also pointed out what she called the "up-raised fist of communism" the Indian figure in the mural.

The mural depicts the Popol Vuh, or Mayan creation myth, about two gods who are punished by their fellows by having to eternally cut back a jungle which grows up again during the night. The Mayan civilization, which flourished from the third to 16th centuries, was noted for its architectural, calendrical and mathematical achievements.

According to Ray Romo, one of the organizers of the El Tortuga Patrol, painters of the mural, "We had no intention for it to be a religious mural. But we can appreciate people coming forward to express their views. That's what the mural is there for."

Two other Live Oak school board trustees were upset by Pisenti's action, however. "It's a totally stupid and foolish protest," snapped Trustee Barney Bricmont. That sentiment was echoed by Trustee John Ritter, who said, "This isn't helping the kids one bit. It's just plain stupid, and doesn't help the community at all."

Pisenti revealed that he will be circulating petitions around the community to have the mural removed or painted over. When enough signatures are collected, he said, they would be turned over to the school board.

The media was out in force for the dedication, but the schoolchildren to whom the presentation was directed didn't seem to care. They were getting out of summer school classes for an hour or two in the sun, and good spirits pervaded.

Young Jeff Watson said he liked the mural. "I like the story and the colors," he said. "But if I'd paint one of my own, I'd do a mural on soccer."